

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION

JOSEPH D.G. SIMPSON, *et al.*,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 18-CV-553

v.

COUNTY OF COOK, *et. al.*

Defendants.

JOINT STATUS REPORT

Per the Court's order, the Individual Plaintiffs Fred Merkerson, Louis Monae, Charles Dunner, Jr., Jonathon Harris, Maurice Richardson and Joseph Simpson, by their Settlement Counsel, J. Bryan Wood of the Kaplan Law Firm, PLLC, and the Defendants, the County of Cook ("Cook County") and the Cook County Sheriff's Office ("CCSO"), by and through their counsel, Tom H. Luetkemeyer of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, and the Cook County Sheriff's Merit Board (the "Merit Board"), by its counsel Ms. Dortricia Penn of the Cook County State's Attorney Office, who together represent all of the Parties to this Joint Status Report on the individual settlements, provide this Joint Status Report for the purposes of detailing the status of the exchange of drafts of the individual settlement agreements. This report is submitted in compliance with the Court's most recent order on August 21, 2025. (ECF No. 511) The parties apologize for not satisfying the Court's July 24 Order (ECF No. 509) due to miscommunication between them.

Initial drafts of the individual settlement agreement have been circulated to the Defendants by outside counsel for Cook County and the CCSO (Hinshaw). Those drafts also have been provided to Settlement Counsel, who provided comments back to defense counsel. Counsel for

Cook County and the CCSO has discussed those comments with its clients and has provided additional details to Settlement Counsel on the Cook County Litigation Subcommittee and Finance Committee process, but has held off on further editing in effort to attempt resolution first.

Settlement Counsel has repeatedly reiterated Individual Plaintiffs' request that they not be required to wait until after "final approval" of any class settlement for their settlement agreements to be approved by the Finance Committee and/or to receive payment, as that would only occur after the notice and opt-out period (and potentially after resolution of any objectors' claims).

Counsel for Cook County and the CCSO has described the mandatory process for settlement approval, involving two steps: the approval of the settlement of the case by the Litigation Subcommittee of the Cook County Board, and approval of settlement by the Finance Committee of the Cook County Board. The Comptroller then issues payments based on case number. While there may be multiple payments issued in one settlement, the actual lawsuit (here, *Simpson v. Cook County, et. al.*, 18-CV-553) proceeds through the process as one case. There are a significant amount of settlements and other litigation payments that require evaluation by the Cook County Board and processing by the Comptroller, given Cook County is among the top two most populous counties in the Country.

Settlement Counsel may seek the Court's assistance in addressing timing of payments. Additionally, counsel for the Cook County and the CCSO has met with Settlement Counsel to discuss Settlement Counsel's comments. Based on these discussions, Settlement Counsel and defense counsel will be meeting with their respective clients about scope of the release and payment attribution, among other issues, in attempt to finalize the settlement agreements.

The details of the settlement agreement of one Individual Plaintiff, Mr. Harris, relies on the description in one of the sections of the Class Settlement; however, the Parties are working on options to draft around that issue.

The Parties hope they will be able to meet and address the remaining items in or before the first week in September, and to incorporate edits into the settlement agreements shortly thereafter.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/J. Bryan Wood

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